THE NEW INDIAN EXPRESS

BENGALURU • TUESDAY • SEPTEMBER 05, 2023 • ₹9.00 • PAGES 18 • LATE CITY EDITION

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**MISSION POSSIBLE: VIKRAM LANDER HOPS AND LANDS SAFELY ON MOON**

**Vikram lander exceeded its mission objective after it underwent a 'hop experiment' and soft landed for the second time on the lunar surface**

**JUMPS 40 CM HIGH, LANDS 30-40 CM AWAY**

On ISRO's command, Vikram fired its engines, jumped to a height of 40 cm as expected, and landed softly on the lunar surface 30-40 cm away from the Shiv Shakti Point. This 'kick start' holds promise for future return and human missions. All systems performed nominally and are healthy, ISRO said. Ramp and payloads were folded back after the experiment

**7th LANDER TO LIFT OFF AGAIN FROM MOON**

- The payloads performed their experiments at the new location and sent their data back to Earth, after which the payloads were switched off. Vikram and Pragyan rover are in sleep mode for the next 14 days
- With this, Chandrayaan-3's lander Vikram became only the seventh such lander in history to refire its thrusters to lift off | P10

Sept 22

**WHEN THE LANDER, ROVER AND PAYLOADS COULD WAKE UP AGAIN**

CHENNAI • MADURAI • VIJAYAWADA • BENGALURU • KOCHI • HYDERABAD • VISAKHAPATNAM • COIMBATORE • KOZHIKODE • THIRUVANANTHAPURAM • BELAGAVI • BHUBANESWAR • SHIVAMOGGA • MANGALURU • TIRUPATI • TIRUCHY • TIRUNELVELI • SAMBALPUR • HUBBALLI • DHARMAPURI • KOTTAYAM • KANNUR • VILLUPURAM • KOLLAM • TADEPALLIGUDEM • NAGAPATTINAM • THRISSUR • KALABURAGI

● WAS REQUESTED BY SHAH TO BEGIN STUDYING SIMULTANEOUS POLL PLAN ON JUNE 2 ● PANEL'S REPORT COULD BE TABLED IN SPL HOUSE SESSION

# KOVIND BEGAN 'ONE POLL' SPADE WORK IN JUNE

### *Chronology samajhiye*

**JUNE 9** Kovind meets Punjab Governor Banwarilal Purohit and Haryana Governor Bandaru Dattatreya in Punjab

**JUNE 10** Party veteran Murli Manohar Joshi calls on him

**JUNE 23** Kovind meets UP Governor Anandiben Patel and CM Yogi Adityanath in Lucknow

**JUNE 26** Union minister Bhupendra Yadav calls on Kovind

**JULY 7** Kovind meets administrator of Dadra Nagar Haveli Praful K Patel

**JULY 16** UP Dy CM Keshav Prasad Maurya calls on the former President

**JULY 17** Governors Ganeshi Lal (Odisha), Rajendra Akalekar (Bihar) and Dr C V Ananda Bose (West Bengal) meet Kovind

**JULY 19** Chief Justice of India D Y Chandrachud calls on Kovind

**JULY 23** Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla pays him a courtesy call

**AUGUST 1** Shah meets Kovind

**AUGUST 5** Kovind flies to Kolkata, meets Ananda Bose

**AUGUST 10** Uttarakhand Governor Lt-Gen (retired) Gurmit Singh calls on him

**AUGUST 11** Gujarat Governor Acharya Devrat pays courtesy call

**AUGUST 19** Kovind meets Kerala Governor Arif Mohammed Khan

**AUGUST 25** Kovind meets Anandiben Patel

**AUGUST 29** RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat calls on him

**SUDHIR SURYAWANSHI** @ Mumbai

•EXPRESS CLUSIVE

ON June 2, four days after the inauguration of the new Parliament building, former President Ram Nath Kovind had two visitors, Union home minister Amit Shah and Dr P K Mishra, principal secretary to Prime Minister Narendra Modi. That meeting apparently set the ball rolling for the much-debated 'one nation, one election' scheme under the stewardship of Kovind, sources privy to the development said.

It all began after the BJP's defeat in the Karnataka polls. It really hurt the party and made it increasingly worried about the numbers in the 2024 Lok Sabha polls, hence the simultaneous polls gambit.

But why Kovind? Sources said the former President keeps a low profile, but is capable of handling intricate legal matters. Besides, he is trusted by Modi. "Modi quietly asked his trusted party functionaries to prepare the ground for simultaneous polls so as to loosen the Opposition consolidation ahead of the 2024 polls," said a source.

On Friday, Kovind was formally named the head of the 'one nation, one poll' panel. The names of its members were announced the following day. On Sunday, Union law ministry officials met Kovind ostensibly for the panel's preparatory work.

But preparatory work is what the former President appeared to be doing ever since he was sounded out on June 2. A cursory look at his social media timeline indicates how he went about preparing the ground, meeting at least 10 governors within the last three months.

**QUIET AND EFFICIENT**

Kovind was chosen to head the panel as he maintains a low profile and accomplishes the job efficiently and quietly

Retired Presidents don't have a busy itinerary. They generally enjoy their sunset years, perhaps writing a memoir or two. In contrast, Kovind started travelling around to Raj Bhavans and hosting governors and party leaders.

Between June 9 and August 29, he met at least 10 governors/administrators, some of them more than once, besides senior party leaders and the head of the RSS (see timeline).

With the government formalising the panel's appointment, it has already begun work on firming its proposals on simultaneous elections. Its report could as well be tabled during the five-day special session of Parliament from September 18 to 22. The thinking behind the draft is that Assemblies whose tenures expire by 2025 (like West Bengal and Maharashtra) would be dissolved, while the tenures of states that recently went to polls, such as Karnataka and Himachal Pradesh, will get a year's extension so that elections there can be held simultaneously in the next cycle, that is in 2029.

A senior leader said holding the Lok Sabha and Assembly elections together could put the Opposition bloc, INDIA, in disarray. "In West Bengal, it will be difficult for Trinamool Congress chief Mamata Banerjee, Congress and Left parties to sew up an alliance for both the Assembly and Lok Sabha polls, as each party would want to first protect its local interest. Similar problems would arise between the AAP and the Congress in Delhi and Punjab and elsewhere. The BJP hopes the regional parties that are with the Congress will squabble, giving the saffron party more elbow room," said sources.

## Priyank backs Udhayanidhi on religion remark

**EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE** @ Bengaluru

SUPPORTING Tamil Nadu Minister Udhayanidhi Stalin's controversial remarks on 'eradicating Sanatana Dharma,' Karnataka Minister Priyank Kharge, on Monday said any belief that promotes inequality in society doesn't qualify to be a religion. "In my view, a belief that doesn't treat humans equally cannot be called a religion, be it any religion. Every human must be treated equally, and a religion must promote the dignity of a human being. Otherwise, it is as good as a disease," he said.

On September 2, Udhayanidhi, son of Tamil Nadu CM MK Stalin, compared Sanatana Dharma with dengue and malaria, and had said, "Rather than merely opposing Sanatana Dharma, it should be eradicated."

Kharge also attacked the Centre over 'One Nation One Election', calling it a tactic to divert attention from other crucial issues. "The government is scared of I.N.D.I.A. They did not call a Parliament session on the pandemic, unemployment, China's intrusion, or Manipur violence, but wanted to call a session for the elections."

Kharge requested the Centre to look at the pros and cons suggested by the Lok Sabha research department and questioned whether security forces were consulted as the move requires smassive security deployment.

## Udhaya's remark has nothing to do with I.N.D.I.A: TMC

**EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE** @ Kolkata/New Delhi/Chennai

WITH the BJP seeking to push the Opposition bloc, I.N.D.I.A, on the backfoot over DMK leader Udhayanidhi Stalin's comments against Sanatana Dharma, the grouping made its first attempt on Monday to wriggle out of the situation.

The Trinamool Congress distanced I.N.D.I.A from the statement, with its spokesperson Kunal Ghosh saying upfront, "We condemn such a remark... The I.N.D.I.A bloc has no connection with such comments. Harmony is our culture. We have to respect other religions." His party boss and Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee was more guarded. "Every religion has separate sentiments. India is about Unity in Diversity. We should not be involved in any matter which might hurt a section of people," she said.

Congress general secretary K C Venugopal said his party's stand is equal respect to all religions but each party in the I.N.D.I.A bloc is free to articulate its views. In Tamil Nadu, the Congress took a different line. TNCC president K S Alagiri said, "Criticising Sanatana Dharma and denial of god are two different things. Udhayanidhi's remark against Sanathana Dharma is rational."

**NOT WORRIED ABOUT CASES, SAYS UDHAYA**

Sports minister Udhayanidhi Stalin on Monday said he had spoken against discrimination and inequality in all religions and did not single out Hinduism

In Uttar Pradesh, Mahant Paramahans Das of Ayodhya walked into legal hot waters of hate speech by announcing a ₹10 crore bounty for beheading Udhayanidhi.

As for the BJP, its TN president Annamalai went after HR&CE Minister P K Sekarbabu, alleging he remained silent when Udhayanidhi spoke against Sanatana Dharma. P5

### HONOUR KILLING

Condemning 'honour' killing, CM Siddaramaiah appreciated *TNIE* for its report on the subject, and is planning to meet various stakeholders to frame a separate stringent law to deter such crimes | P4

EXPRESS READ

**ED seizes properties of popular hatchery**

BENGALURU: The Directorate of Enforcement (ED) has seized nine immovable properties worth Rs 65.53 crore of Venkateshwara Hatcheries Pvt Ltd in Karnataka and Maharashtra, under the provisions of Foreign Exchange Management Act, 1999, the agency said on Monday | P9

**Body of doctor washed away fished out in DK**

MANGALURU: The body of a doctor who was washed away while trying to save his friend from drowning at Someshwar beach here on Sunday midnight was recovered Monday morning. The victim Dr Ashik Gowda, 30, was a resident of Ramanagara | P5

MANIPUR VIOLENCE

## FIR filed against Editors Guild for 'biased' report

**PRASANTA MAZUMDAR** @ Guwahati

THE Manipur Police has filed an FIR against Editors Guild of India (EGI) president Seema Mustafa and senior journalists Seema Guha, Bharat Bhushan and Sanjay Kapoor for publishing a "biased, factually inaccurate" report on the ethnic violence in the state. Justifying the action, Manipur Chief Minister N Biren Singh alleged they were trying to create more clashes. The Guild in a hard-hitting report published Saturday had slammed the internet ban in the state and 'one-sided reporting' by certain media outlets. The report also accused the state leadership of being 'partisan' while dealing with the ethnic conflict.

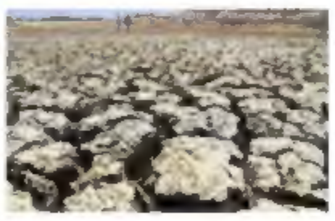
The FIR is based on a complaint by one Ngangom Sarat that the Guild's report is 'fabricated and sponsored'. He said the report published the photo of a forest department building that was set on fire with a misleading caption — 'Smoke rises from a Kuki house on 5 May'.

## K'taka to decide on drought-hit taluks after Thursday cabinet meet

**EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE** @ Bengaluru

THE State Government will identify and announce drought-hit taluks after its cabinet meeting on Thursday.

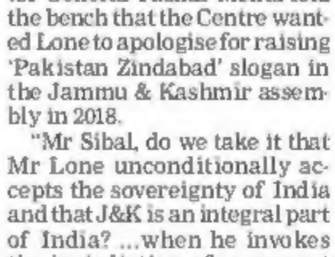
The cabinet subcommittee, which met on Monday, stated that in the 113 taluks where a survey was conducted to assess the ground situation, 62 meet the norms set by the central government to be declared drought-hit. But as the situation has deteriorated in the remaining 51 taluks and another 83 taluks since the survey was conducted, deputy commissioners have been directed to conduct surveys of all these 134 taluks, said Revenue Minister Krishna Byregowda.



He told the media that the state is facing a rain deficit since the onset of southwest monsoon in June this year. There was a shortage of 56 per cent in June, while the state received a good rainfall in July. But again in August, the shortage shot up to 73 per cent. From June 1 till September 4, the state should have received 711 mm rain, but got only 526 mm, which is a deficit of 26 per cent. The southern parts of the state are the worst hit.

Byregowda said the first set of ground truth survey reports hold good till August 19. But after the survey was conducted, the condition of crops has declined in the remaining 51 taluks and additional 83 taluks. The deputy commissioners in these areas have been told to conduct the survey and the report is likely to be ready within a week. "Once we get the report of 134 taluks, we will announce drought-hit taluks," he said.

CONTINUED ON: P4



File photo of National Conference leader Mohammad Akbar Lone

## SC asks Lone to affirm allegiance to Constitution

**SHRUTI KAKKAR** @ New Delhi

THE Supreme Court on Monday directed National Conference leader and Lok Sabha MP Mohammad Akbar Lone, the lead petitioner challenging the abrogation of Article 370, to file an affidavit swearing allegiance to the Constitution of India and recognizing Jammu and Kashmir as an integral part of India. A five-judge bench headed by Chief Justice D Y Chandrachud directed senior advocate Kapil Sibal, who appeared for Lone, to have the affidavit filed by Tuesday.

The ruling came after Solicitor General Tushar Mehta told the bench that the Centre wanted Lone to apologise for raising 'Pakistan Zindabad' slogan in the Jammu & Kashmir assembly in 2018.

"Mr Sibal, do we take it that Mr Lone unconditionally accepts the sovereignty of India and that J&K is an integral part of India? ...when he invokes the jurisdiction of our court under Article 32, he necessarily abides by the Constitution ... but we want to have it from him that he unconditionally accepts that J&K is an integral part of India and that he abides by and owes allegiance to the Constitution," Chandrachud said.

## Tiger mauls 10-yr-old to death at Nagarhole

**EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE** @ Mysuru

A tiger mauled a 10-year-old boy to death at the Metikuppe forest range under the Nagarhole Tiger Reserve on Monday. The boy, Charan Nayak from the Banjara community, was a resident of Kallahatti village in HD Kote taluk.

The police said the boy was resting under a tree when the tiger attacked him and dragged him. Charan's father Krishnakar was working at a nearby farm, but could not save him. The mutilated body was later found near the farm.

Shocked residents demanded forest officials to capture the tiger. HD Kote Banjara Mahasabha leader Krishna Nayak blamed the Forest Department for Charan's death. "Despite villagers complaining about tiger movement in the area, foresters failed to take action. The department must provide proper compensation to the victim's family," he said. The principal chief conservator of forests ordered Nagarhole foresters to capture the tiger.

BEYOND THE BOUNDARY

## *Soft India-Pak diplomacy begins with a cricketing visit*

**EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE** @ Pallekele

WITH just a month remaining for the 50-over World Cup, two fierce rivals on the cricket field, India and Pakistan, are showing signs of bonhomie. For the first time in 15 years, Indian cricket board officials got to cross the Attari border to the Pakistani side on Monday.

It is quite a coincidence that India played their last match on Pakistan soil was during the Asia Cup in 2008. Though India are participating this time, their board (BCCI) did not allow the team to play in Pakistan. The BCCI, however, did honour Pakistan Cricket Board's invitation and allowed two of its senior office-bearers to visit Lahore on Monday.

Even as rain continued to batter India matches in Pallekele, Sri Lanka, BCCI president Roger Binny and vice-president Rajeev Shukla reached Lahore after crossing the Attari-Wagah border. The duo will watch the Group B match between Afghanistan and Sri Lanka on Tuesday followed by a Super Four match the next day. Pakistan last hosted India for a bilateral series in 2006.

"Pakistan is the host of the Asia Cup. The visit by this delegation is purely cricketing and there is no politics involved. It is a two-day visit and the Governor of Punjab is hosting us for dinner and all three teams Bangladesh, Afghanistan and Pakistan will be present. We shouldn't mix cricket with politics," Shukla, also a Rajya Sabha MP of Congress, told journalists in Amritsar.

BCCI president Roger Binny and vice president Rajeev Shukla with Pakistan Cricket Board chairperson Md Zaka Ashraf (centre) in Lahore on Monday | PTI

Shukla was part of the BCCI delegation that visited Pakistan for the historic 'Friendship Series' in 2004.

Speaking on the chances of resumption of the Indo-Pak series, Shukla said: "The decision on bilateral series is taken by the Indian government and we would follow whatever the government suggests." Former India player Binny recollected his last visit to the country. "I last visited Pakistan in 2006 when I was a part of ACC. Pakistan's hospitality has been very, very good." P13